United Nations A/52/PV.87

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-second Session

87th plenary meeting
Thursday, 4 June 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/52/785/Add.7)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/52/785/Add.7, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 4 February, 23 and 31 March, 27 April, 6 and 15 May and 2 June 1998, Ecuador and Yemen have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Draft resolution (A/52/L.74)

The President: Members will recall that at its 86th plenary meeting on Tuesday, 2 June 1998, the Assembly decided to consider this item directly in plenary meeting.

In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council, which is issued as document A/52/L.74.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.74.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.74, entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.74?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/231).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 106?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 21 and 60 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/856)

Draft decision (A/52/L.76)

98-85394 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/855)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.77)

The President: As members will recall, the General Assembly began consideration of both items at its 86th plenary meeting on 2 June 1998. In my letters of the same date transmitting to the Permanent Representatives texts of the draft decision under agenda item 21 and the draft resolution under agenda item 60, I stated that, in the absence of any objection by 12 noon yesterday, 3 June 1998, I would have the revised texts issued as "L" documents. I should like to inform members that I have received a reply from only one delegation, which reads as follows:

> "I would like to inform you that my delegation has carefully studied the revised texts following the debate in the General Assembly yesterday and is in complete agreement that you can now proceed accordingly."

I hope that all those present will associate themselves with this letter.

With this concurrence, the Assembly therefore has before it a draft decision submitted under agenda item 21, issued as document A/52/L.76, and a draft resolution submitted under agenda item 60, issued as document A/52/L.77.

I should like to draw the attention of Member States to a slight correction in the English version of draft resolution A/52/L.77.

The first "of" in the second line of the first preambular paragraph should be replaced by the words "contained in". The first preambular paragraph should therefore read:

> "Having considered the aspects concerning the organization of work of its regular sessions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/241,".

In draft decision A/52/L.76, the General Assembly welcomes the views expressed by the Presidents of the Assembly at its forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions, commends the efforts made by the Main Committees in the streamlining of their agenda and method of work, and decides to continue the consideration of the revitalization process of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

With regard to draft resolution A/52/L.77, members will recall that the General Assembly held informal consultations immediately after the adjournment of the 86th plenary meeting to discuss the text of the draft resolution on the organization of work of the regular sessions of the General Assembly. Draft resolution A/52/L.77 is the result of the consultations.

In the preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/52/L.77, the General Assembly recalls resolution 51/241, whereby it adopted the recommendations of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, and notes the provisions of resolution 36/67 of 30 November 1981 concerning the opening date of the regular session as well as the observance of the International Day of Peace. In the operative part, the General Assembly sets the date of 8 September 1998 for the closing of its fifty-second session and 9 September for the opening of its fifty-third session. By this draft resolution, the Assembly would continue to observe the International Day of Peace on the opening day of the regular session, and include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system" for further consideration.

In view of the urgency of the matter before us and the desire of the members to dispose of these items expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft decision under agenda item 21, contained in document A/52/L.76, and the draft resolution under agenda item 60, contained in document A/52/L.77. In this connection, since both documents A/52/L.76 and A/52/L.77 have been circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure. However, I should like to remind members that the texts of the draft decision and the draft resolution have been made available to delegations as annexes to my letters dated 2 June 1998 to all Permanent Representatives.

The relevant provision of rule 78 reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been

circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/52/L.76, submitted under agenda item 21, and draft resolution A/52/L.77, submitted under agenda item 60.

I shall now call on a representative who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I should like also to remind members that when we started discussing these items, only three statements were made by representatives, and none of them exceeded 10 minutes.

Mrs. Castro de Barish (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Costa Rica, which proposed the International Day of Peace — observed each year on the opening day of the regular session of the General Assembly — is in full agreement with the proposed change, which is being made because the session of the General Assembly is to begin on an earlier date. For that reason, we support the decision and express our appreciation for the continued observance of the International Day of Peace on the opening day of the session of the General Assembly.

The President: We have just heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will first take a decision on the draft decision under agenda item 21 (A/52/L.76), then on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 60 (A/52/L.77).

We turn first to draft decision A/52/L.76 submitted under agenda item 21. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision A/52/L.76 was adopted.

The President: We turn now to draft resolution A/52/L.77 submitted under agenda item 60, the English text of which was orally corrected by the Chair. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.77, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/52/L.77, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 52/232).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 60?

It was so decided.

The President: I would like to remind you that we close this session on 8 September and open the next session on 9 September.

Agenda item 97 (*continued*)

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(a) Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

Letters from the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/52/832, A/52/919

The President: Members will recall that at the 82nd plenary meeting, on 31 March 1998, the General Assembly reopened the consideration of this sub-item and decided to consider it directly in plenary meeting, so that the Assembly could take note of the letters from the Chairman of the Second Committee relating to the timing, modalities and focus of the two-day high-level dialogue on the theme of the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it two letters from the Chairman of the Second Committee circulated in documents A/52/832 and A/52/919.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to take note of documents A/52/832 and A/52/919?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to recall for the attention of delegations that, by taking note of these two letters, the General Assembly has thus decided, *inter alia*, that the high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership will take place on 17 and 18 September 1998, as part of its fifty-third session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 97?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.88

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-second Session

88th plenary meeting
Friday, 26 June 1998, 11.40 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Boyd (Panama), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Agenda item 95 (*continued*)

Macroeconomic policy questions

(c) Science and technology for development

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members will recall that the General Assembly, at its 86th plenary meeting on 2 June 1998, decided to reopen the consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 95 and to consider the sub-item directly in plenary meeting.

In connection with this sub-item, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/52/L.75/Rev.1.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.75/Rev.1.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): The informatics revolution which started some years ago has now gained a momentum of astronomical proportions. It is radically transforming all areas of human activity. The entire decision-making and strategy-planning processes of Governments and the private sector depend heavily today on information and communication technology. Information technology has thus become the lifeblood of our domestic and global markets.

While this revolution constitutes one of the greatest opportunities in human history, it also poses unprecedented challenges. One of these is the year 2000 (Y2K) problem. The very first minute of the new millennium will bring the world face-to-face squarely with the challenge of this global virus, crawling forwards and backwards into the deepest nooks and crannies of our worldwide network of computers.

Considering the enormity and complexity of the Y2K problem, our response has to be predicated on a certain set of basic assumptions. First, the problem has wide implications, not just for computers, but indeed for all equipments which use embedded chips. Secondly, the omnipresent nature of these embedded chips makes it virtually impossible to correctly fathom the full degree of the problem or even to identify all the affected sectors. Thirdly, this is a problem which is global in nature and its solution will have to be found globally, without making any distinctions based on per capita computer projections. Fourthly, the deadline of 31 December 1999 is totally immutable, so that all corrective action will have to be completed before that deadline — in fact, much earlier. Fifthly and finally, this challenge, because of its very global nature, presents an opportunity for international collaboration in seeking an international response to an international problem.

It is for these reasons that the United Nations has come into play in trying to resolve this problem. Action in the United Nations on Y2K is subdivided into two distinct parts. In the first place, action has to be taken

98-85502 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

within the secretariats of the United Nations system, not just in New York, but also at all the other main United Nations stations, in order to ensure compliance. In the second place, action has to be coordinated globally in the Member States.

Under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics and its task force, action started within the United Nations Secretariat last year. We hope that the United Nations system will be compliant well in time, before the dawn of the new millennium. However, the second area of action in the Members States is much more complicated. The States Members of the United Nations are at various levels of development. Some have millions of computers and billions of embedded chips in use; others count them in hundreds only. But both face the same challenge because of the deep interconnections in the global network of computer links.

While many Member States have already started systematic efforts to address the need for Y2K compliance, there are many others which are not yet fully aware of the nature and magnitude of this international problem. Awareness and action levels have not attained the required stage or speed necessitated by the deadline of 31 December 1999. Given the importance that deserves to be attached to this problem, action is now being brought before the General Assembly.

Pakistan has the honour to present the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.75/Rev.1 The draft resolution is the result of wide consultations and is action-oriented and forward-looking. It not only highlights the gravity of the Y2K problem, but calls specifically on Governments to attach due priority to national action and global cooperation. It calls upon the Economic and Social Council to prepare guidelines at its forthcoming substantive session to enable Member States to address the diverse aspects of the problem. It requests the Secretary-General to ensure compliance within all parts of the United Nations system; and it calls for a monitoring and reporting system within the United Nations, so that action is completed well before the deadline.

While the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the United Nations system closely monitors actual and potential sources of funding to support the efforts of the developing countries and countries in transition to address the Y2K problem, it also expresses its appreciation at the establishment of a Trust Fund by the World Bank to assist in the efforts to resolve the problem with substantial voluntary contributions from Member States.

We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. The Pakistan delegation will continue to hold itself in readiness to be of all assistance in this Y2K endeavour, as it has done in all aspects of the vitally important subject of informatics.

Mr. Sklar (United States of America): I am pleased to express the support of the United States for the draft resolution on the global implications of the year 2000 problem. In a world vastly dependent upon electronic systems for the processing and exchange of financial and other data, it is imperative that nations address the year 2000 problem now. Those which fail to do so risk serious disruption to critical business and government functions. And with the inflexible deadline of 31 December 1999 fast approaching, there is truly no time to waste. Probably no other issue that has come before this body is of such common interest to all Members, large and small, developed and undeveloped. We are all dependent upon a solution to this problem, and we are all interconnected.

This is an international problem that has implications for every nation. More than any other technological challenge we face, the year 2000 problem highlights the interconnectedness of today's world. Year 2000-related system failures in key areas such as international telecommunications, banking and transportation in any one country could have effects on many other countries. Nations not only need to address the problem within their own borders but must share information and expertise on possible solutions internationally. The need for this kind of cooperation was one of the key reasons we worked hard to raise the issue at the recent Birmingham G-8 Summit, and why we were so pleased to work closely with the United Nations Working Group on Informatics on the year 2000 resolution. We also look forward to the elaboration of guidelines for Member States, to be set out by the Economic and Social Council at its upcoming substantive session.

The draft resolution recognizes that the problem affects more than just large mainframe systems. Electronic devices with date-sensitive microprocessors or embedded chips are also at risk. Unchecked, this "growth industry" of the problem has the potential to cause failures in everything from manufacturing equipment to traffic signals. We believe that, in addition to dealing with system challenges, countless countries need to pay

close attention to this important aspect of the year 2000 problem. This was brought home to me personally when I asked how I should deal with the two portable computers I use every day, and it was simply suggested that the problem is so complex that I should be prepared to throw them into the wastebasket next year and buy new units to replace them.

We also encourage every nation to examine its year 2000 readiness, and not just in governmental systems. Government officials should be making inquiries on the status of preparations in the private sector, especially with regard to key infrastructure areas, including energy, telecommunications, transportation and financial institutions. Member States should appoint national year 2000 coordinators at the highest level. We have already done so. A coordinator can help countries raise awareness of the problem among public and private sector organizations.

Finally, we encourage every nation to think about contingency plans for critical business processes as we move towards the new millennium. By this fall, we will have reached a point where, despite all of the best efforts to prepare, some systems for which no year 2000 remediation efforts have begun will not be ready by 1 January 2000. We encourage nations to develop contingency plans for those critical business processes that are most at risk of experiencing failures.

Both my delegation and I, personally, would like to thank Ambassador Kamal for his extraordinary leadership and for leading the Working Group on Informatics and to thank him and the Group for all their hard work on this important draft resolution and for raising the level of awareness of the year 2000 problem generally within the United Nations.

Mrs. Djatmiko-Singgih (Indonesia): The global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem for computers are a matter of deep concern, particularly to developing countries. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I should like to say that we expect that, with the consensus adoption of this draft resolution, we will be able to assist developing countries with their limited capacity to absorb and comprehend, let alone apply, the new information technology such as that relating to the year 2000. We therefore support the draft resolution and extend our heartfelt appreciation to Ambassador Kamal for his invaluable efforts in coming up with this very important draft resolution.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.75/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.75/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/52/L.75/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 52/233).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

I should like to remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Thorne (United Kingdom): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of resolution 52/233, on the global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem for computers. This issue has, we believe, potentially far-reaching implications for the effective operation of Governments, companies and other organizations worldwide. The European Union had already placed the issue on the agendas of last December's meeting of the European Council in Luxembourg and April's second Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM II) in London. We are pleased to see that the problem is now being addressed in the United Nations.

The European Union believes that the priority of the United Nations system in this area should be to ensure that the computer systems within United Nations control are millennium-compliant. This resolution asks the Secretary-General to adopt a plan of action and to report back to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of that plan. In the context of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics, Member States have

been assured by the Secretariat that computers throughout the United Nations system are already millennium-compliant. The European Union hopes that the Secretariat will take the opportunity of the report to the fifty-third session to place these assurances, and the basis for them, on the record.

The United Nations system has a further responsibility: to raise awareness of this problem and the potential means of addressing it. The United Nations Web site, and that of the United Nations Development Programme, already contain useful information. This work should be pursued with a view to ensuring the widest possible dissemination. The resolution also calls on the Economic and Social Council to prepare a series of guidelines on which Member States might draw in addressing the problem. The European Union will be ready to work positively in this regard at next month's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

The European Union believes that the primary responsibility for addressing the year 2000 date conversion problem rests with national Governments and the private sector. But if these efforts are to be successful, a collaborative approach will be required. Key actors will include the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular the World Bank, and the myriad companies which make up the private sector of the global economy. It is gratifying to see that in this resolution the United Nations is taking up its share of the responsibility. We should not lose sight of this responsibility in the short time available before the deadline of December 1999.

Mr. Tchoulkov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation joins other delegations in welcoming the adoption of resolution 52/233. We find it to be balanced as a whole and feel that it reflects our shared concern at the year 2000 problem.

We believe that the electronic interdependency of the States Members of the United Nations in today's rapidly growing information-based society is an important element of the world economy. As members are aware, this question received very serious consideration at the recent meeting of the Group of Eight in Birmingham. It is our view that with respect to resolving the year 2000 problem, which could have a negative impact on the smooth functioning of the global informational infrastructure and on the world economy as a whole, the United Nations has responded rapidly to the situation. We believe that this redounds to the credit of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics of the Economic and Social Council and its Chairman, Ambassador Kamal.

In conclusion, I should like to inform the Assembly that in the Russian Federation this question is also receiving very serious consideration and that the Government has already adopted a resolution on resolving the year 2000 problem.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 95?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 17 (g), 114, and 114, 153 and 157 together; 116, 118, 122 (a) and (b), and 123 and 159 together; 124 (a), 125 to 127, 129 to 132, 136 to 142 (a), 143 and 161.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Djamel Moktefi of Algeria, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour to present today the reports of the Fifth Committee on the deliberations of its second resumed fifty-second session. The Fifth Committee held its second resumed session for a period of three weeks, from 11 to 29 May 1998 and on 26 June 1998. The Committee held 10 plenary meetings, and negotiations were carried out through numerous informal consultations.

The following is a brief report on the result of the work of the Fifth Committee at its second resumed fifty-second session.

Regarding agenda item 17 (g), entitled "Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/52/676/Add.2, whereby the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the nomination of Mr. Mochamad Slamet Hidayat, of Indonesia, as a member of the United

Nations Staff Pension Committee, for a term of office beginning on the date approved by the General Assembly and ending on 31 December 2000.

With regard to item 114, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the reports of the Committee are contained in documents A/52/746/Add.2, A/52/746/Add.3 and A/52/955. Under this agenda item, the Committee took action on five questions: three decisions, namely the guidelines on internal control standards, the strengthening of external oversight mechanisms and the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and two resolutions concerning the gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities and the proposed United Nations Code of Conduct, which was also considered under agenda items 153, "Human resources management," and 157, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals".

Concerning item 116, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/744/Add.3. In this report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 8, in connection with the Development Account, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 118, entitled "Joint Inspection Unit", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/842/Add.1. The Committee decided to defer consideration of the item to its next resumed session, to be held from 17 to 21 August.

Concerning item 122 (a), on the financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/931. In this connection, the Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 8 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 122 (b), on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/932. In this connection, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.52 by a vote of 89 to 2, with 1 abstention.

Concerning items 123, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission", and 159, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/547/Add.2. In this report, the Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding item 124 (a), on the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/933. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 9 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 125, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/843/Add.1. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 126, entitled "Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/934. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 127, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/935. In this report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft decision contained in paragraph 6, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 129, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/936. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding item 130, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/937. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in

paragraph 8 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 131, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/938. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 132, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/939. As indicated in this report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft decision contained in paragraph 6, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 136, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/844/Add.1. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 137, entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/726/Add.1. As indicated in the report, the Committee adopted an oral decision to defer consideration of the item to its next resumed session, to be held from 17 to 21 August.

Regarding item 138, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/690/Add.1. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 139, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Easter Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/940. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 140, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/941. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to item 141, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/845/Add.1. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning item 142 (a), on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the report of the Committee is contained in documents A/52/453/Add.3 and Add.4. In addendum 3, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of two draft resolutions and two draft decisions, which were adopted by the Committee without a vote. In connection with addendum 4, regarding the support account for peacekeeping operations, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 143, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/846/Add.1. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the deferral of the consideration of this item to its next resumed session, to be held from 17 to 21 August. This oral decision, proposed by the Chairman, was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, concerning agenda item 161, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic", the report of the Committee is contained in document A/52/942. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of its report, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that by paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. This means that where separate or recorded votes were taken, the Assembly will do the same.

I would hope that the Assembly will proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(g) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/52/676/Add.2)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Mochamad Slamet Hidayat as a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a term of office beginning on 26 June 1998 and ending on 31 December 2000.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints that person?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Parts III and IV) (A/52/746/Add.2 and Add.3)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will first take a decision on the three draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of part III of its report (A/52/746/Add.2).

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Guidelines for Internal Control Standards", which was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We turn next to draft decision II, entitled "Strengthening of external oversight mechanisms", which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We turn now to draft decision III, entitled "Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", which was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of Part IV of its report (A/52/746/Add.3). For the present, the text of this draft resolution will be found in document A/C.5/52/L.55.

The draft resolution, entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/234).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

Agenda items 114, 153 and 157 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Human resources management

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/955)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft decision, entitled "Proposed United Nations Code of Conduct", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 114, 153 and 157.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part IV) (A/52/744/Add.3)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of part IV of its report.

The draft resolution is entitled "Development Account".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/235).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Indonesia, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): Before we conclude our consideration of this agenda item, permit me to state that the Group of 77 and China agreed to join the consensus on this resolution since it clearly spells out the regrettable quality of documents A/52/758 and A/52/848. In this regard, the documents did not fully respond to the requirement of resolution 52/12 B and did not provide substantive information or clear direction to enable the General Assembly to take a final decision on this important issue at this time.

Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to once again underline the importance of the provision we have just adopted, requesting the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly no later than 31 July 1998, during the third part of its resumed fifty-second session, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the detailed report on the sustainability of the Development Account, the modalities of its implementation, the specific purposes

and the associated performance criteria for the use of resources requested in its resolution 52/12 B and decision 52/477, including the elements as contained in operative paragraphs 4 (a), 4 (b), 4 (c) and 4 (d) of this resolution.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Secretariat has taken due note of the observations of the representative of Indonesia.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/842/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 122

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/931)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report, entitled "Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/236).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes to express its very strong reservations about the resolution just adopted. Since international law demands that the aggressor country assume the cost of its aggression, Israel should do so. Yet it still refuses to withdraw from the occupied territories in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and in contravention of the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force.

Thirty-one years have passed since the Israeli aggression against Arab territories, and Israel continues to occupy Arab territories in defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and in disregard of the rights of the indigenous population and the will of the international community, which calls upon Israel to withdraw from these Arab territories.

Mr. Mirohammad (Islamic Republic of Iran): As the representative of Syria has done, we would like to put on record our position that the expenses of this mission should be borne by the aggressor party.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 122.

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/932)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 14 of its report, entitled "Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

A separate vote has been requested on the first preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 16 of the draft resolution.

I shall now put to the vote the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 16, on which a single separate vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela

The first preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 16 were retained by 68 votes to 2, with 41 abstentions.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in paragraph 14 of document A/52/932 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

The draft resolution was adopted by 109 votes to 2 (resolution 52/237).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote.

Mr. Sklar (United States of America): I wish to take this opportunity to explain the vote of the United States delegation on the resolution entitled "Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

I seek the Assembly's indulgence in making this explanation, as my delegation had previously explained its position when this issue was voted upon in the Fifth Committee last month. However, I believe it is important to reaffirm our position so that it can be better understood by all delegations present today, and since it is a matter of principle.

Our opposition to the present resolution is based on its relationship to last year's resolution (resolution 51/233), which we opposed and which is not a consensus resolution of this world body. We remain deeply concerned about paragraphs 7 and 8 of that resolution, which decided that costs of $1,773,618 — which stemmed from the incident at the United Nations headquarters of the Force at Qana on 18 April 1996 — should be borne by Israel. We believe that United Nations resolution 51/233, and those portions of the current resolution which refer to it, jeopardize important points of principle for United Nations operations and politicize the work of the Fifth Committee.

The use of a General Assembly funding resolution to pursue claims against a Member State is not correct procedurally. Since shortly after the inception of the United Nations, the procedure which has been followed is that the Secretary-General presents and pursues settlement of the Organization's claim against a State or States. This procedure was first begun in 1946 in the Middle East and continues today for peacekeeping-related damage claims in the Balkans. Using a funding resolution to legislate settlement is inappropriate. It also politicizes the work of the Fifth Committee and should be avoided in the future.

Because of our concerns, the United States worked in good faith to find a compromise during the recently concluded resumed session of the Fifth Committee, similar to our efforts last year when this issue first arose. We sought a consensus text that did not set an undesirable precedent, or raise issues of the legality of the Committee's action or politicize the technical tasks assigned to the Fifth Committee.

As we said at the Fifth Committee meeting last month, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is an organization which is implementing a difficult and important mandate. We strongly support it in its attempts to fulfil that mandate. We regret that a consensus text without politicization on renewing the funding for UNIFIL could not be achieved.

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): The member States of the Group of 77 and China are deeply concerned that, despite our continued and sincere wish to take action by consensus, the General Assembly has once again taken a decision on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) by vote. It is a matter of principle for the Group of 77 and China that General Assembly resolutions and decisions be fully respected.

In this regard, the Secretary-General and the responsible party should fully implement the provisions of the resolution that we have just adopted, as well as those of resolution 51/233, which was adopted on 13 June 1997.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank all the Member States that supported and voted favourably on the resolution.

Mr. Najem (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The resolution on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) that we have just adopted merely reaffirms that it is up to the aggressor, Israel, to fulfil its international obligations and implement all the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. Our position is based on the idea that the aggressor should assume full responsibility for its aggression, especially if that aggression is premeditated and deliberate, runs counter to the will of the international community and results in thousands of victims.

I wish to stress that this does not in any way mean that Lebanon does not believe in the principle of collective responsibility. On the contrary, we reaffirm our solid commitment to respect this principle. However, we do not wish there to be a precedent set in the history of this Organization whereby one Member State of the United Nations undertakes aggression against another Member State and then shelters itself behind the flag of the United Nations. The aggressor State should assume its responsibility for losses caused by its actions.

We do not want a precedent to be established in that respect, and we do not want to encourage such aggression in the future. Lebanon believes that Israel's continuing occupation of parts of Bekaa and southern Lebanon, its failure to respect Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and its daily, repeated acts of aggression are responsible for the cycle of violence in southern Lebanon and the problems faced by UNIFIL and the Lebanese civilians in southern Lebanon. Israel, like other States, must comply with the will of the international community and abide by the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, including in particular Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

I should like, on behalf of Lebanon, warmly to thank the Group of 77 and China for having adopted the Arab Group's position on the financing of UNIFIL. Moreover, and in the name of my Government, I wish to

pay tribute to the active and pioneering role played by UNIFIL and to thank all the members of that Force. I should also like to thank all those States, without exception, that have supported the financing of UNIFIL, especially in its work for peace in the region. The presence of UNIFIL in Lebanon is of great importance.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to explain its vote on resolution 52/237, on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In adopting this resolution, the General Assembly has again affirmed Israel's responsibility for the expenses resulting from its terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters at Qana on 18 April 1996, an attack that was condemned by the United Nations at the time.

This is the second year that the General Assembly has considered the consequences of the crime committed by Israel against UNIFIL in Lebanon. UNIFIL was originally established as a result of Israel's aggression against southern Lebanon. Israel's aggression against UNIFIL added a further crime to its record, which is replete with crimes, massacres and inhumane practices against the Arabs of the occupied Arab territories.

Israel's disregard of resolution 51/233, which required it to provide compensation — token compensation — for the damages incurred as a result of its many crimes, should not be overlooked and allowed to occur with impunity. This Assembly must hold Israel responsible; Israel must not remain a rogue State, acting outside international law, as has always been its practice.

My delegation expects Member States to remember that the terrorist attack by Israel against UNIFIL resulted in bloodshed and destruction, the consequences of which are still apparent at the headquarters of the Force and elsewhere in southern Lebanon. United Nations soldiers, who come from various parts of the world in response to the United Nations call for peacekeeping in Lebanon, are threatened every time Lebanese civilians, who are trying to defend their land, children, families and dignity, take refuge in the headquarters of the Force.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its consistent position that Israel should be called upon to pay not only the costs of its aggression against the UNIFIL headquarters, where innocent Lebanese civilians sought protection and refuge; Israel, which took pleasure in adopting a policy of force, occupation and aggression, is also responsible for financing the Force completely.

Syria affirms that the adoption of this resolution is a victory for the principles of right, justice and peace, which the entire international community, with the exception of Israel, is working to achieve. Israel, which pays no heed to the principles and objectives of the United Nations or the Fourth Geneva Convention in particular, will not even fulfil the simplest financial obligation provided for in resolution 51/233, which openly called upon Israel to assume responsibility for the costs of its aggression against UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

My delegation thanks all the countries that supported the resolution. Israel's responsibility for the financial obligations referred to in the resolution is clear proof of its responsibility for the aggression against UNIFIL at Qana in southern Lebanon.

Mr. Mirmohammad (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation voted in favour of the relevant paragraphs of resolution 52/237, which has just been adopted by the Assembly. Furthermore, we believe that the expenses of the whole mission should be borne by the aggressor.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 122.

Agenda items 123 (*continued*) **and 159** (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/52/547/Add.2)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of part III of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/8 C).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda items 123 and 159.

Agenda item 124

Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

(a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/933)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission", without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/238).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 125 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/843/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/228 B).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 126

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/934)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/239).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 126.

Agenda item 127

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/935)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 127.

Agenda item 129

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/936)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/240).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda item 130

Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/937)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/241).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/938)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/242).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 132

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/939)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 136 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/844/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/229 B).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 137 *(continued)*

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/726/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of Part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 138 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/690/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/243).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 139 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/940)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/244).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/941)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/245).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 141 (*continued*)

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/845/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/246).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Parts IV and V) (A/52/453/Add.3 and 4)

Draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.54

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will first take up the recommendations contained in part IV of the report of the Fifth Committee and then the recommendations contained in part V of the report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of part IV of its report and on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of the same document.

Draft resolution I, entitled "Third-party liability: temporal and financial limitations", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/247).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Draft resolution II, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/1 B).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Draft decision I, entitled "Budgetary requirements for peacekeeping operations", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Draft decision II, entitled "Death and disability benefits",

was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of part V of its report.

The text of the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.5/52/L.54. Entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations", it was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/248).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): For explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Thorne (United Kingdom): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union, under agenda item 142, on the apportionment of the costs of peacekeeping operations.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and the associated country Cyprus — as well as the European Free Trade Association country, member of the European Economic Area, Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomed the distribution in the Fifth Committee, on 29 May 1998, of the paper containing the requested update of the relationship between peacekeeping assessment shares of Member States and their respective per capita incomes. This information had been supplied earlier, in document A/47/484, following a request from the General Assembly in resolution 46/240 of 22 May 1992.

In that context, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report on the anomalies in the allocation of Member States to the four groups in the ad hoc peacekeeping scale. The document eventually produced gave a starting point for the debate on the elimination of those anomalies.

As representatives will be aware, as long ago as January 1996 the European Union put forward in the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations a comprehensive package of measures aimed at resolving the financial crisis of the Organization. One of the elements contained in that package was a call for the revision of the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations to make it more equitable, transparent and automatically adjustable to take into account altered economic circumstances, while continuing to take account of the needs of Member States with below average per capita incomes.

It is because of the importance that the European Union attaches to this proposal that we asked for the updated information, which we received. We made that request in our statement delivered in the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee, on 10 March, and again in the Fifth Committee's formal meeting of 18 May. In the information note which was issued on 29 May, as an informal paper rather than as an official conference room paper, we are provided with useful and revealing information. We shall need to analyse the data further, and will revert to it in due course under this, the appropriate agenda item. However, it is already clear from the updated information we have now received that the number of discrepancies in the relationship between peacekeeping assessment shares of Member States and their respective per capital incomes has increased. A significant number of group C countries with above average gross national product are receiving unwarranted subsidies, not only from those Member States that pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, but also from those countries which, if there were a change in the group system, would more deservedly benefit from it. This surely indicates the need for a radical but equitable change to the current system.

It is our firm opinion that this matter should be dealt with under agenda item 142, where we address the financing of peacekeeping operations, and as we did in December 1997 in the context of the allocation to the scale of Slovakia. In order to do this properly, there must be transparency and free access to information by all Member States.

It is unacceptable to the European Union that Member States should not be given the full information which they request, in order to better inform us in our deliberations on this, or indeed any item before the Fifth Committee. This is a matter of principle for the European Union.

Mr. Hanson (Canada): My delegation has two subjects which it wishes to address at the present time under this item. On the first subject, I will speak on behalf of the delegations of Australia, New Zealand and my own country, Canada. On the second subject, I shall pass the microphone to my colleague for a statement on behalf of Canada alone.

With regard to the first subject, many delegations from time to time have requested that the Secretariat provide information to the Fifth Committee, whether orally or in the form of conference room papers; and that information has been provided. Our delegations, as a matter of firm principle, have supported the right of each and every delegation to request information from the Secretariat and to have it provided to all.

It is a matter of the greatest concern to our delegations that some members of the Fifth Committee, whether in their national capacities or as members of the Bureau of the Fifth Committee, have sought to interfere with the right of delegations to request and receive information, and even to engage in prior censorship of such information. We hope that they are cognizant of the seriousness of what they have attempted.

There are broader implications which go well beyond the Fifth Committee. It is not possible to restrict any of the rights of any delegation or group of delegations without similarly restricting the rights of all delegations. We hope that delegations will agree that the work of the Fifth Committee must be guided by transparency to enable the General Assembly to reach fair and logical decisions in the most efficient manner, to enable the Fifth Committee to serve the Assembly in the best possible way, and to enable the Fifth Committee to support the mandated activities of the United Nations in the best possible way.

Mr. Gibbons (Canada): Our delegation joined consensus on the resolution entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations". However, we regret that the General Assembly is not yet able to fund the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters (RDMHQ) from the support account. We believe that if the United Nations is to live up to the Charter's claim of collective responsibility for dealing with threats to international peace and security it must improve its capability to act when required, or it must default on this core responsibility.

In paragraph 81 of its report, document A/50/230 of 22 June 1995, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations urged

> "the Secretary-General to develop a rapidly deployable headquarters team composed of personnel skilled in essential military and civilian headquarters functions".

The Committee's report, and the subsequent General Assembly resolution, resolution 50/30, were adopted by consensus.

During July 1996, the Secretary-General instructed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to implement the rapidly deployable mission headquarters within the Department. In his progress report on the standby arrangements system, document S/1996/1067 of 24 December 1996, the Secretary-General stated that he had decided to establish the skeleton of an RDMHQ within the Secretariat to

> "ensure that the deployment and initial phases of a peacekeeping operation receive the necessary management and guidance". [para. 13]

Plans to staff the eight posts of the RDMHQ implementation team with, first, gratis officers and, secondly, bilaterally funded officers were discarded due to concerns about equitable geographical distribution of those eight posts. The third option, a United Nations trust fund, was instituted in order to raise sufficient funding to implement and support the activities of the RDMHQ until more stable, predictable funding could be arranged. However, the trust fund was never intended to become a perpetual source of funding for the RDMHQ.

An important development has taken place since the RDMHQ trust fund was started. Last year, the Secretary-General's Track 2 reform proposals contained a recommendation that the Security Council and the General Assembly should consider measures to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations. This recommendation was endorsed by consensus in resolution 52/12 B, section C, paragraph 6, which requested the appropriate organs to consider, as a matter of priority, specific measures to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations in peacekeeping.

Security Council resolution 1159 (1998) of 27 March 1998 authorized a new United Nations peacekeeping mission known as the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). The Secretariat was instructed to establish a new field mission headquarters in Bangui and take over authority for the Mission on 15 April 1998. Because the RDHMQ

does not yet exist, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had to assemble an ad hoc headquarters staff on only 19 days' notice. While they were able to establish the headquarters as instructed, the entire process would have been greatly simplified if the RDMHQ had been in existence because its core personnel would have provided continuity to the MINURCA planning process which originated in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations some time ago.

Chapter I, Article 1, of the United Nations Charter states that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. Peacekeeping is one of the measures developed to undertake this collective responsibility. One of the key weaknesses of United Nations peacekeeping has always been the inability of the Organization to quickly establish a new field mission headquarters capable of providing effective control of an operation. The need to adopt specific measures to improve the Organization's capacity to rapidly deploy a new peacekeeping mission has been identified as a priority recommendation in the Track 2 reform package and has been endorsed, as I mentioned earlier, in General Assembly resolution 52/12 B.

The RDMHQ trust fund was intended as an interim mechanism and not a perpetual source of funds for this purpose. The Secretariat support account submission recommended the funding of eight posts for the RDMHQ implementation team. The Secretariat has also clarified the specific rule and organizational relationship of the RDMHQ. Support account funding will ensure that the eight posts can be staffed on the basis of equitable geographic distribution without the need to employ gratis officers. The new MINURCA mission in the Central African Republic is a perfect example of why the United Nations still requires this headquarters.

Canada remains committed to the RDMHQ concept and intends to seek a thorough consideration of this important initiative during the forthcoming post-by-post review.

Mr. Sklar (United States of America): We would like to join Canada and then Canada, Australia and New Zealand and affirm our support for both of the statements just made by Canada. With respect to the RDMHQ, we will not comment further since we did express our strong endorsement for the implementation of this mandated function during our Fifth Committee comments.

We would like to amplify a little bit upon Canada's first statement, which it made for itself, Australia and New Zealand, on a matter also alluded to in the concluding remarks of the European Union. During the course of this year's Fifth Committee debate, transparency, which must be the watchword of this Organization, i.e., the ability of any Member to request information and get it, was aborted and thwarted, possibly, it seems, by Members in positions of power in the Bureau of the Fifth Committee. Those in positions of responsibility have an extra responsibility to ensure that information requested and prepared will be transmitted in full and in no way retarded, edited or censored.

We deplore the action that occurred in connection with this matter. We urge that it never occur again. Transparency is the watchword and it applies to all of us, not just on matters of particular interest to us. In particular, it must never be thwarted by those in positions of responsibility in any of our working committees or in the General Assembly.

Mr. Soares (Portugal): Portugal fully agrees and supports the explanation of vote just made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity I would like to add that the attempt to stop the circulation of documents prepared by the Secretary-General or to restrict the transmittal of information contained therein to a number of delegations by members of the Bureau of the Fifth Committee is unacceptable behaviour which we can only condemn.

The elimination of parts of documents prepared by the Secretariat for the information of delegations is a form of censorship never encountered in the Fifth Committee, which Portugal denounces and which is not conducive to the maintenance of a climate of trust among delegations which is needed to facilitate the taking of decisions by consensus.

Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia): Let me, if I may, speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My delegation does not intend to debate the statement that has been delivered by my distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union, and indeed my delegation abides by your ruling, in accordance with General Assembly rules and procedures, not to reopen the debate.

On behalf of the Group of 77, I would like to place on record that the Group of 77 and China continue to

believe that this is not the right time to discuss or to reopen the debate on the issue of the scale of assessments of peacekeeping operations. I would also like to reiterate that members of the Group of 77 and China respect the right of each and every Member State of this Organization. It is my sincere hope that we will put any mistrust and misunderstanding aside. It is not in the interests of the Group of 77 and China to continue the debate, which could be detrimental to this Organization. Furthermore, we sincerely hope that all Member States of this Organization will see the matter with an open mind.

Mr. Herrera (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Like the delegation of Indonesia, my delegation believes this is not the appropriate moment to reopen the debate and the analysis of the peacekeeping assessments. However, we would like to clarify that if it were ever decided that this topic should be considered, my delegation would propose that the nations that have a great deal of power in this Organization should find this power reflected in the scale of assessments. Those States that have greater political power vis-à-vis the rest of the members of the Assembly should pay more. We believe that if there have been errors in the present scale of assessments, then explanation of these errors should be given. Perhaps we should conduct a review, a review which should enjoy the support of the consensus of all Member States.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I apologize for taking the floor. I had not planned to, but my delegation feels that it now must do so. Without embarking upon a debate of substance, my delegation would like to associate itself fully with the statement of the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation profoundly deplores the unfounded accusations, lacking in impartiality, which have been voiced today by certain delegations in this plenary session of the General Assembly, and in the absence of the Chairman of the Committee. Accusations have been made against the Bureau in circumstances which do not permit members of the Bureau to defend the reasons why they took certain measures. In order to give a clearer picture of what happened, allow me to recall certain facts.

Reactions varied when that request for documents was made during formal meetings of the Fifth Committee. Some were in favour of issuing those documents, while other delegations, notably those of the Group of 77 and China, formally expressed their wish that the debate not take place at that juncture because the Fifth Committee had a number of other items on its agenda. Therefore, in the spirit of achieving a calm working atmosphere in the Committee, the Bureau — acting fully within its rights — made its decision on the basis of various statements made by delegations and on the basis of objective criteria.

I hope that the Chairman of the Fifth Committee will have an opportunity to give a more detailed explanation of the circumstances in which the Bureau took it upon itself to make that decision.

This is why we vigorously and deeply deplore the unfounded accusations that have been made by some delegations with respect to the Bureau of the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Zhang Wanhai (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation believes that this is not the time to discuss the peacekeeping assessment. The Chinese delegation therefore supports the statement and the position expressed by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Monayair (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation would like to state very briefly that it supports the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Ms. Incera (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation did not intend to take the floor at this stage. However, having listened to the statements made by a number of delegations, I must say that their unfair statements regarding the members of the Bureau are regrettable, particularly bearing in mind that the Chairman of the Fifth Committee had already explained what took place when the relevant document was requested.

My delegation fully supports what the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee stated just a few moments ago.

Ms. Buergo Rodríguez (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to state very briefly my delegation's firm support for the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in connection with the need for us to bear in mind that we are not in a position at this juncture to reopen the debate on the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations, which has already been the subject of ample negotiations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 143 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/52/846/Add.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 143.

Agenda item 161

Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/942)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/249).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 161.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations

A/52/PV.89

Official Records

General Assembly

Fifty-second Session

89th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 July 1998, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Young (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola and members of the United Nations Observer mission in Angola

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now pay tribute to the memory of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, Maître Alioune Beye, and to the memory of the members of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, who perished in the aircraft accident of 26 June. On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to their memory.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/52/785/Add.8)

The Acting President: In a letter contained in document A/52/785/Add.8, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/52/785 and addenda 1 to 7, Honduras has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 36 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Draft resolution (A/52/L.53/Rev.2)

The Acting President: In connection with agenda item 36, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution, issued as document A/52/L.53/Rev. 2, entitled "Participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations".

98-85564 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I should like to inform members of a correction to paragraph 7 of the annex to the draft resolution. The comma appearing in the paragraph should be replaced by a semicolon.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.2.

I shall first call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The General Assembly meets today to debate once more a Palestinian proposal to enhance the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Observer Mission in the General Assembly. We will be casting our votes nearly seven months to the day after the General Assembly first considered this issue. At that time, the Assembly wisely deferred the issue on a procedural vote. That was the right thing to do then, and it is the right thing to do now. This is the wrong draft resolution at the wrong time.

We have no doubt that most members of this Assembly are sincere supporters of the peace process in the Middle East. They want to see that process moving forward again and are frustrated by the fact that there has been a prolonged impasse. So are we. They want to encourage the parties to make rapid progress on the basis of agreements already achieved. They want to see these negotiations result, at long last, in an agreement that would lead to accelerated negotiations on permanent status. The United States strongly endorses this aim as well. No one has been more energetic in the pursuit of an agreement than we. The fact remains, however, that by taking this action the General Assembly will have made it more difficult to accomplish this objective. Focusing on symbols likely to divide, rather than on steps to promote cooperation, will lead us nowhere. Supporting unilateral gestures which will raise suspicion and mistrust between negotiating partners will not take us closer to our goal.

If this draft resolution is adopted, it will undermine our efforts to get the peace process back on track and will hurt everyone's interests, including those it is most intended to help. Exchanging momentum towards real progress on the ground for symbolic progress in this Hall does not strike us as a good bargain.

Moreover, if this draft resolution is adopted, it could also set a precedent. By overturning decades of practice and precedent in the General Assembly governing the participation of non-members and observers, others who do not enjoy full member status in the United Nations may well press their own claims for enhanced status. This would have serious repercussions for political relations among Member States and would have a deleterious effect on the orderly conduct of United Nations business.

The Arab-Israeli peace process has come a long way since the Oslo accords were signed in 1993. Given the current stalemate, it may not seem so. But the historic gains of the past several years cannot be ignored. We in this Assembly should look for ways to consolidate those gains and help create the conditions in which the parties will find it easier to move forward. That means, at a minimum, that we should take no steps that could undermine the fragile climate of trust and confidence so necessary for the peace process to succeed. A vote in favour of this draft resolution will not contribute to this result and, in truth, may seriously undermine it. That is why we ask our fellow Members to join us in voting "no" on this flawed proposal.

Mr. Gold (Israel): Israel opposes the draft resolution on participation of the Palestinian Observer Mission in the work of the United Nations because of both the preambular language, which serves as the basis of the draft resolution, and the operative elements proposed. The preambular part seriously misrepresents previous United Nations resolutions. For example, this draft resolution, which is sponsored by 13 Arab States, makes reference to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. It is ironic that at that time, 51 years ago, every single Arab State, as well as the Palestinian leadership, rejected resolution 181 (II).

In a statement in the Trusteeship Council on 20 February 1950, Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Abba Eban, underlined the fact that this was not just

> "the exercise of a legitimate right of non-compliance"

with a non-binding resolution, but rather

> "the use of armed force to overthrow the recommendation of the General Assembly". [*T/PV.230, p. 8*]

To come now as a group, insisting on an improvement in Palestinian participation in the United Nations on the basis of a United Nations resolution that they strongly resisted, simply misrepresents the experience of the United Nations in this matter.

Further misrepresentation in the preambular part is evident in references to General Assembly resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988. While this resolution changed the designation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), it clearly stipulated, in paragraph 3, that this change would take effect

> "without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system".

Today's draft resolution conveniently overlooks this qualification.

Finally, it must be added that reference to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in parts of the West Bank and Gaza represents a transparent effort to create a political link between this draft resolution and the status of the disputed territories. The clear purpose of this effort is to affect the outcome of the permanent status negotiations over this territory by abusing the United Nations system.

Notwithstanding Israel's reservations about the intentions behind this draft resolution, it must be emphasized that both the preambular and operative parts make clear one central fact: there is no effective change of the status of the PLO in the United Nations. The PLO remains an observer organization in the United Nations system. Still, the attempt to achieve additional rights and privileges with the intention of obtaining a symbolic shift in status should be opposed, for it contradicts the bilateral basis of the Arab-Israeli peace process begun in Madrid, and it violates the principles of the Oslo agreements.

Israel has been prepared, since the signing of the Hebron Protocol on 15 January 1997, to resume the permanent status negotiations. Israel again undertook this commitment in the Note for the Record, signed by the United States. The PLO has refused to resume these talks, in violation of the Note for the Record. Instead, it seeks to obtain symbolic elements of changed political status by means of United Nations resolutions. The international community should deplore these efforts and encourage the parties to resolve their differences bilaterally, at the negotiating table, and not in the General Assembly.

In this context it is important to recall the commitment given in writing by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to our late Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on 9 September 1993:

> "The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides, and declares that all outstanding issues related to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations."

The United Nations has a choice of reinforcing this commitment, or undermining its content and weakening the Arab-Israeli peace process. I call upon Member States to oppose this initiative and thereby strengthen the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation finds itself in a very painful situation. Not so long ago in this very Hall, a draft resolution similar to the one we are debating this morning was withdrawn with a view to holding effective consultations. Our question as a delegation is, what is at stake? The answer is: lasting peace and a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

What is the role of the United Nations in this context? To ensure that peace prevails in the Middle East. Suppose this draft resolution is adopted today. What would be the consequences? Will we have achieved peace? Peace is an important commodity in the Middle East, to which, in our view, both parties are entitled.

We have a duty as the United Nations not to exercise a double standard but to tell the truth in order to help the parties involved. My delegation realizes the frustration that the Palestinian people are experiencing. They have already been waiting too long. Realizing that recent events and developments are not on their side, they have made some human mistakes. When all the doors are locked, you attempt to find a way through the roof or through the windows. But the question is, what happens when you throw yourself through the window? You break your bones, you break your head, and that is the end of you.

True enough, the doors to a lasting peace are heavily locked at the moment. But we have a duty as the United Nations to look for a way that will not kill the people we should be saving — the people we should be supporting in their quest to be a sovereign state.

The conferences relating to the Middle East question were supported by us all because there was light at the end of the tunnel — the possibility that peace would prevail. My delegation has not given up yet. Like any other delegation with a positive outlook, we still believe that peace can be achieved without compromising the dignity of the United Nations, clearly embodied and enshrined in our Charter. The Charter, as the torch-bearer, guides us and shows us how we should do things and how we should counsel one another.

My delegation believes that we have not yet exhausted all channels. We have not yet exhausted all efforts to persuade the two parties to come to the conference table. Every effort must be made to ensure that the spirit of the Madrid Conference and the Oslo agreement is rekindled and that the parties agree to and honour the provisions enshrined in that agreement.

I have already said that it is true that there are reasons for the other party to be frustrated. We have a duty, therefore, to counsel whomsoever feels the light at the end of the tunnel is too far away. Accordingly, my delegation calls on both parties to make a serious commitment to realize a lasting solution in the Middle East.

It is our policy as the Kingdom of Swaziland that when parties are at war, it is best not to favour one over the other but to stand in the middle and offer counsel, so that all might enjoy the friendship that could then develop between both of the parties.

The Palestinians are our friends — our brothers and sisters. The Israelis are our friends — our brothers and sisters. Our quest, therefore, is to call upon all of them to make a commitment to find a lasting solution in the Middle East.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Uruguay has from the outset followed closely the entire process associated with the item now before us — the question of Palestine — and we wish to make a brief statement on this issue.

The draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.53/Rev.2, dated 2 July 1998, highlights a very technical legal problem concerning the extension of the status of observer to the United Nations, a problem on which we should first obtain an opinion from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. Only once we have an independent legal opinion on the scope and regulatory implications of this draft resolution will we be able to take a decision on the substance of the matter.

In our view, adoption of this draft resolution would result in changing the status of observer in one particular case only, and not in a general way through a course different from that provided for in existing regulations.

We would in practice be conferring upon an observer certain attributes which by their nature are proper to a Member State, in particular those set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the annex to the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.2, as orally corrected. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Bulgaria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Liberia, Malawi, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, Zambia

Draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.2, as orally corrected, was adopted by 124 votes to 4, with 10 abstentions (resolution 52/250).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Angola, Nigeria and Tajikistan informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Cameroon and Swaziland had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in explanation of vote after the voting, I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The General Assembly has just decided to confer upon Palestine, in its capacity as observer, additional rights and privileges of participation in the work of the General Assembly. By doing so, the Assembly has responded positively to a concern of the Permanent Observer of Palestine, who had repeatedly argued that he was experiencing practical difficulties in his daily work at the United Nations.

The European Union recognizes the potential for practical difficulties resulting from the fact that neither the Charter nor any text of a general nature codifies the rights and privileges of observers at the United Nations. These rights and privileges have indeed been granted over the decades on a case-by-case basis. This resolution is therefore not regarded by the European Union as creating a precedent.

After the General Assembly suspended consideration of this item last December, the European Union had the opportunity to carefully study different modalities on how best to facilitate the practical aspects of the work of the Palestinian observer delegation. In this context, the European Union's aim was to ensure clear formulations and to avoid any ambiguities.

Since the text as contained in document A/52/L.53/Rev.2 met these requirements, the European Union was in a position to cast a positive vote. The European Union hopes that, through the implementation of the practical measures as contained in the annex, the future work of the Permanent Observer of Palestine will be facilitated.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution entitled "Participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations". As members know, this item was the subject of lengthy and difficult consultations among interested countries. This is understandable, as a change in the status of any delegation to the United Nations is no ordinary matter, and requires a carefully considered decision that accords with existing rules, traditions and practices relating to the work of the Organization. Nor can we fail to be mindful of the fact that in the present very difficult circumstances surrounding the Middle East settlement, the effort of the Palestinians to bring the status of their delegation into line with the serious political changes that have taken place in the Palestinian territories over recent years deserves serious consideration.

We appreciate the fact that, during work on the draft resolution, the sponsors showed flexibility and took into account virtually all the comments, advice and amendments that were offered by a number of a delegations, including our own. The adoption of this resolution conferring additional rights upon the Palestinian delegation — first and foremost with respect to Palestinian and Middle East issues — does not in fact contradict that delegation's observer status, and therefore sets no undesirable precedent for other similar situations.

As we express our satisfaction at this constructive outcome, we reaffirm our readiness to engage in further cooperation with the delegation of Palestine in the United Nations.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): Canada voted in favour of resolution 52/250 because we believe that it will permit

the Palestinian delegation to better participate in the work of the United Nations. It is Canada's view that the resolution adopted today states in precise terms the modalities of granting additional rights and privileges for Palestinian participation as an observer at the United Nations. Negotiations removed some of the difficulties which we had identified in earlier drafts of the text, such as the suggestion that the Palestine Liberation Organization was acquiring rights reserved only for Member States.

Canada's policy regarding Palestinian statehood has not changed, and our vote in favour of this resolution does not alter that policy. Canada continues to strongly support the Middle East peace process and the negotiations currently under way, which seek the full implementation of the Oslo accords.

Ms. Millar (Australia): Australia has voted in favour of this resolution because we consider it a practical procedural measure which will clarify and assist the participation of the Palestinian observer delegation in the United Nations.

The resolution enhances the Palestinian observer delegation's current rights as an observer without the right to vote or to put forward candidates. The resolution has no bearing on the issue of Palestinian statehood. The issue of Palestinian statehood is one that remains to be determined in final status negotiations between the parties involved in the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): Japan shares the grave concern expressed by an overwhelming number of the States Members of the United Nations over the deadlock in the Middle East peace process. We particularly regret the announcement by the Government of Israel of its plan to strengthen its control of Jerusalem by extending that city's boundaries. This unilateral action taken by the Government of Israel may precipitate a crisis of confidence that would destroy the very foundation on which the peace process rests.

As a country that has been actively contributing to that process and has continuously played a leading role in providing economic assistance to the Palestinians, Japan urges all parties involved to return to the negotiating table and to act to restore the atmosphere of mutual trust that is the *sine qua non* for progress in this area.

We supported the resolution before us, which provides a more detailed description of the additional rights and privileges conferred on Palestine, in its capacity as observer, with regard to its participation in the sessions and work of the General Assembly than was provided by draft resolution A/52/L.53, which was submitted to the General Assembly in December 1997.

On this occasion, my delegation wishes to make two comments. First, from a political perspective, the Government of Japan has no doubt that the efforts most critical to the Middle East peace process are those to be made by the parties most directly involved. The adoption of this resolution must not be permitted to adversely affect those efforts.

Secondly, from a legal perspective, the General Assembly has not discussed in the past the additional rights and privileges that are given to observers, such as those we see in the resolution before us. In this connection, the delegation of Japan thinks it might be appropriate for the General Assembly to review, as and when necessary, the rights and privileges enumerated in the annex of the resolution on the basis of the information the Secretary-General will provide in accordance with operative paragraph 2.

Mr. Paguaga Fernández (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Nicaragua voted in favour of resolution 52/250, consistent with its position of supporting any decision that promotes universal representation and the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. However, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call on the observer of Palestine to make a statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for presiding over today's meeting and for giving us the floor in order to speak for the last time from this seat.

(*spoke in English*)

Today is an important day for Palestine and the United Nations, which has dealt with the question of Palestine since its inception. Today, the General Assembly decided to upgrade the Palestinian representation through the adoption, by an overwhelming majority, of the resolution entitled "Participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations", in spite of pressures, campaigns and even threats.

I would like to begin by expressing gratitude to our Arab family and to friendly States that have sponsored the resolution since last December, as well as to friendly States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, which decided, at the ministerial level, to support the Palestinian endeavour in this regard. Without the support of these brothers, sisters and friends, we would not have been able today to succeed in our achievement.

I would also like to extend our thanks to the States members of other groups, in particular members of the European Union, with which we worked and exerted efforts to reach an agreement on the text of the resolution, which we believe has great political importance. The support of each State Member of the United Nations that supported this resolution today is something we highly appreciate and we thank them on behalf of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership. The overwhelming majority that voted in support of the resolution makes us feel proud, strengthens our conviction of the justice of our cause, and increases our confidence that right can still be achieved in our contemporary world.

I do not wish to enter into a discussion of some of the views raised today, which we obviously reject. However, I would like to note that it is indeed astonishing when a party claims that a certain act constitutes a "unilateral action" at a time when 124 States supported this act. Unilateral actions are those illegal actions which violate international law, United Nations resolutions and binding existing agreements; they are not actions based on international legalities, even if those parties disagree with such actions.

I have said that I do not wish to enter into a discussion of some views which we reject, because the first and last answer to these — actually, the decisive answer — is the overwhelming majority of Member States which supported the resolution today.

A small victory was achieved for Palestine today and we thank everyone for that. However, we do want to say that it is our hope that our reliance on the resolution adopted today will not last long, as we hope that the United Nations will accept Palestine as a Member State in the near future — maybe, God willing, during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. That shall be the big victory.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 36.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.